

3/RTS

10/539994
JC09 Rec'd PCT/PTO 17 JUN 2005

Attorney Docket No.: 2002P01290WOUS

- 1 -

Method and arrangement for treating objects with at
least one treatment agent in a household device, said
household device, associated packaging and a dosing
device

5

The invention relates to a method and an arrangement
for treating objects with at least one treatment agent
in a household device, a household device for treating
10 objects with at least one treatment agent, a packaging
of at least one treatment agent and a dosing device for
dosing at least one treatment agent.

Various household devices for treating objects are
15 known, such as, for example, washing machines for
cleaning laundry and dishwashers for cleaning crockery,
which use a plurality of cleaning agents which can be
composed of various ingredients having different active
parameters. That is, some of these ingredients require
20 certain ambient conditions so that they can release
their effect. Some of these ingredients cease to be
effective under certain ambient conditions, such as
enzymes, for example, at an ambient temperature higher
than 50 degrees centigrade.

25

WO 01/07703 A1 discloses a device for the take up and
dosed release of at least one active compound mixture
in a washing machine, a dryer or a dish washer,
comprising chambers for the take up of a dose of at
30 least one active compound mixture respectively. The
device also comprises an opening arrangement for the
chambers, which is activated by means which in turn are
activated by the conditions prevailing in the inside of
the machine, which conditions prevail solely in the
35 course of a washing, drying or dish-washing cycle.

- 2 -

WO 01/07704 describes a device for receiving and dispensing an active composition in a dosed manner into a washing machine, linen drier or a dishwasher, which
5 comprises a storage chamber which receives at least double the amount of an individual dose of said active composition. This device also comprise a dosing chamber which is connected to the storage chamber by a passage in order to receive an individual dose of an active
10 composition. A discharging passage is provided to discharge said active composition into the interior of the machine which, like the passage between the storage chamber and dosing chamber, is actuated by means which are activated by conditions inside the machine,
15 existing exclusively during a wash, dry or dishwashing cycle..

The disadvantage of the devices described in WO 01/07703 A1 and in WO 01/07704 A1 is that the
20 dispensing of the dose into the interior of the machine can be activated by ambient conditions, i.e. dosing parameters and/or that after the dispensing, ambient conditions may be present which are disadvantageous for the efficiency of the active composition or individual
25 ingredients thereof or which hinder the efficiency of the active composition of individual ingredients thereof.

EP 1 088 927 A1 discloses a device for dosing and/or
30 dispensing at least one product into an appliance for treating laundry or dishes, said device comprising at least one sensor for determining the ambient conditions. This device contains a teachable device which can identify up to three treatment programmes
35 after a few learning runs. If one of the learned

- 3 -

treatment programmes is executed by the device after the learning runs, the product is dispensed into the interior of the appliance at a time determined by the device.

5

The disadvantage of the devices described in EP 1 088 927 A1 is that the device requires a few learning runs of a treatment programme before the time at which the product is dispensed can be adapted to this treatment programme. In addition, in this device also the ambient conditions at and/or after the time at which the product is dispensed into the interior of the appliance can be disadvantageous for the efficiency of the product or of some of its ingredients.

15

It is the object of the invention to improve the efficiency of treatment of objects in a household device.

20

This object is solved in an arrangement according to the invention of the type specified initially in that the arrangement comprises a household device for treating objects with at least one treatment agent, that the arrangement comprises a packaging for the at least one treatment agent and/or a dosing device for dosing the at least one treatment agent, that the household device comprises a first part of an identification system which makes it possible to identify data of a second part of said identification system, which comprises information on at least one treatment agent and/or on the dosing device, that the packaging and/or the dosing device comprises the second part of said identification system, and that the treatment and/or the dosing is automatically adapted to this information.

25

30

35

- 4 -

In addition, a household device of the type specified initially according to the invention is also provided to solve the object, wherein the household device
5 comprises a first part of an identification system which is configured such that it can identify data of a second part of the identification system, which comprises information on the at least one treatment agent and/or on the dosing device for dosing the at
10 least one treatment agent, and that the treatment and/or the dosing is automatically adapted to this information.

In addition, a packaging of the type specified
15 initially according to the invention is provided to solve the object, said packaging being configured such that the packaging comprises a second part of an identification system which is configured such that its data can be identified by a first part of the
20 identification system and that the data comprises information on a composition and/or active parameters of the at least one treatment agent.

Furthermore, a dosing device of the type specified
25 initially according to the invention is provided to solve the object, said dosing device being configured such that it can be inserted into a household device for treating objects, the dosing device comprises the second part of the identification system which is
30 configured such that its data can be identified by the first part of the identification system and that the data comprises information on the dosing device.

Finally, the object is solved in a method of the type
35 specified initially according to the invention wherein

- 5 -

the household device comprises a first part of an identification system which identifies data of a second part of the identification system, which comprises information on the at least one treatment agent and/or
5 on a dosing device for dosing the at least one treatment agent, wherein a packaging for the at least one treatment agent and/or the dosing device comprises a second part of the identification system, and that the treatment and/or the dosing is automatically
10 adapted to this information.

Since the treatment of objects in the household appliance can be adapted to information on the treatment agent used and/or to information on the
15 dosing device used, the efficiency of the treatment is largely ensured in a simple fashion. In particular, the treatment is adapted to information on the treatment agent so that the ambient conditions in the household device during the treatment are optimal for the
20 efficiency of the treatment agent. For this purpose it is especially advantageous if the information on the treatment agent used comprises the composition and/or the active parameters of the treatment agent.

25 In addition, the treatment can be adapted to information on the dosing device so that the dosing of the treatment agent can be controlled with the aid of the ambient conditions in the household device during the treatment so that the treatment is efficiently
30 efficacious. The information on the treatment agent and/or on the dosing device can be supplied to the household device using the identification system.

If the identification system comprises especially a
35 contact-free identification system, an advantageous

- 6 -

further development consists in the fact that the household device with the first part of the identification system comprises a reader for transponder chips and that the packaging of the at least one treatment agent and/or the dosing device for dosing the at least one treatment agent with the second part of the identification system comprises a transponder chip.

10 In this way it is particularly easy to supply information from the packaging and/or from the dosing device into the household device since the data from the transponder chip can be read by the reader from a distance of about one metre.

15 According to an advantageous embodiment of the invention, the household device comprises a dishwasher or a washing machine. Especially for use in dishwashers or in washing machines there are a plurality of treatment agents having a wide range of compositions which require different ambient conditions for optimal efficiency. In this case, adapting the treatment to the composition of the treatment agent used quite particularly improves the efficiency of the treatment agent and thus the efficiency of the treatment.

20 Further features of the invention and advantageous embodiments of the invention are characterised in the dependent claims.

The efficiency of the treatment of objects in a household device is improved substantially with the present invention.

35

- 7 -

The invention is explained subsequently with reference to the exemplary embodiment shown in the drawings. In the figures:

5 Figure 1 is a schematic diagram of an arrangement according to the invention, comprising a household device, a packaging of a treatment agent and a dosing device according to the preferred embodiment of the invention,

10

Figure 2 is a schematic section view of an arrangement according to the invention comprising a household device and comprising a dosing device according to a further advantageous embodiment of the invention and

15

Figure 3 is a flow diagram of a method according to the invention for treating objects with a treatment agent in the household device using a dosing device according to the preferred embodiment from Fig. 1.

20

The arrangement according to the preferred embodiment of the invention shown schematically in Figure 1 consists of the household device 1, which is a dishwasher in the exemplary embodiment shown but can also alternatively be a washing machine, which comprises as a first part of an identification system a reader 2 for transponder chips, the packaging 3 of the treatment agent which as the second part of the identification system comprises a first transponder chip 4 with information on the composition and the active parameters of the treatment agent, and the dosing device 5 for dosing the treatment agent which as the second part of the identification system comprises

30

35

- 8 -

a second transponder chip 6 with information on the type of dosing parameters of the dosing device 5.

The household device 1 has a receiving container 7
5 which receives objects, e.g. crockery, objects to be washed in the case of a dishwasher or laundry in the case of a washing machine, for treatment, such as cleaning for example. This receiving container 7 contains the dosing device 5 for dosing the treatment
10 agent which comprises a dispensing device 8 which opens and thus dispenses the treatment agent when ambient conditions corresponding to the dosing parameters of the dosing device 5 prevail inside the household device during the treatment.

15

The household device additionally has a programme control device 9 - a programme controller - which can control the treatment and which is connected to the reader 2 so that information on the treatment agent and
20 on the dosing device 5 read out by the reader 2 is available to the programme control device 9 and said device can change the treatment such that said treatment is optimally adapted to the information.

25 It is especially advantageous if, as is shown in Figure 1, information on the composition and active parameters of the treatment agent and also on the type and the dosing parameters of the dosing device 5 are available to the programme control device 9 so that the treatment
30 can be adapted on the one hand such that the ambient conditions can attain the dosing parameters at a time which is optimal for dispensing the treatment agent inside the household device 1. On the other hand, after dispensing the treatment agent, the treatment can be
35 adapted so that the treatment agent is optimally

- 9 -

effective. The treatment of objects in the household device 1 is thus particularly efficacious.

In Figure 1 a contact-free radio-based identification system comprising a reader 2 for transponder chips as a first part and transponder chips 4, 6 as a second part is shown as the identification system. In an alternative embodiment of the invention, the first part of the identification system is a chip card reader 2' and the second part of the identification system is a chip card 4', 6' which is inserted into the chip card reader 2' to identify the data. In this case, it is advantageous if the chip card 4' is loosely appended to the packaging 3 or the chip card 6' is loosely appended to the dosing device 5 so that the chip card 4' or 6' can be inserted into the chip card reader 2'.

According to a further advantageous embodiment of the invention, the identification system is an electromagnetic identification system wherein the first part is a magnetic card reader 2'' and the second part is a card 4'', 6'' with a magnetic strip which can be inserted into the magnetic strip reader 2''. In this case it is also advantageous if the card 4'' is loosely appended to the packaging 3 or the chip card 6'' is loosely appended to the dosing device 5 so that the card 4'' or 6'' with the magnetic strip can be inserted into the magnetic strip reader 2''.

According to a further advantageous embodiment of the invention, the identification system is a barcode system wherein the first part is a barcode scanner 2''' and the second part is a label 4''', 6''' with a barcode which is passed by the barcode scanner 2''' to identify the information.

- 10 -

The arrangement according to a further advantageous embodiment of the invention shown in a schematic diagram in Figure 2 comprises the household appliance
5 20 which is a dishwasher in the exemplary embodiment shown but alternatively can also be a washing machine, which as a first part of the identification system comprises a reader 21 for transponder chips, and comprises the dosing device 22 for actively dosing the
10 treatment agent 23 which as the second part of the identification system comprises a transponder chip 24 with information on the type of dosing device 22.

The household device 20 has a receiving container 25
15 which receives objects, such as for example crockery in the case of a dishwasher or laundry in the case of a washing machine, for a treatment such as cleaning for example. This receiving container 25 contains the dosing device 22 for actively dosing the treatment
20 agent which comprises a dispensing device 26 which can be actively opened and closed by the dosing device 22 to release the treatment agent 23 in a dosed fashion.

The household device 20 additionally has a programme
25 control device 27 - a programme controller, which controls the treatment and which is connected to the reader 21 so that the information on the type of dosing device 22 read out by the reader 21 is available to the programme control device 27. The household device 20
30 also has a transmitting unit 28 which is in communication with the programme control device 27 and can transmit a control signal to control the dosing of the dosing device 22.

- 11 -

The dosing device 22 comprises a receiving unit 29 which can receive the control signal and which is in communication with the dispensing device 26 so that the dispensing device can be opened or closed depending on the control signal received. The dosing of the treatment agent 23 can thus be controlled using the control signal. If the programme control device 27 yields information on the ingredients of the treatment agent 23, the time and quantity of the dosing can be controlled in this fashion.

It is especially advantageous if the reader 21 for transponder chips can also be used to transmit the control signal and likewise the transponder chip 24 of the dosing device 22 can receive and evaluate the control signal since the transmitting unit 28 and the receiving unit 29 can be omitted in this way.

The flow diagram shown in Figure 3 shows the individual steps involved in the treatment of objects in the household device 1 according to Figure 1. In a first step 31 the objects for treatment are inserted in the receiving container 7 of the household device 1. In a second step 32 the user pours the treatment agent from the packaging 3 into the dosing device 5, inserts the filled dosing device 5 into the receiving container 7 and closes the household device 1. In a third step 33 the user selects a programme for the treatment and starts it.

The next steps are executed completely independently by the household device. In a fourth step 34 the data from the transponder chip 4 of the packaging 3 of the treatment agent and from the transponder chip 6 of the dosing device 5 are read out by the reader 2 and

- 12 -

transmitted to the programme control device 9. In a
fifth step 35 parameters and modules of the selected
programme in the programme control device 9 are adapted
to the information on the treatment agent and on the
5 dosing device. In a last step 36 the treatment is then
carried out according to the adapted programme.

The efficiency of treatment of objects in a household
device 1, 20 is improved substantially with the present
10 invention.